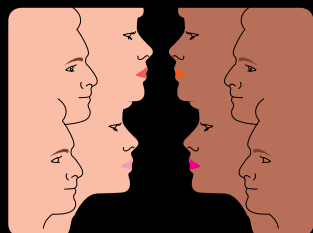




Emergency Management

UPDATE

July 2001



Poll confirms public apathy reduces disaster readiness

Barely a third of those living along the northern coastline from Virginia to Maine are concerned about hurricanes and flooding, according to an American Red Cross survey on hurricane preparedness.

Only 23 percent of the respondents said they have assembled a disaster supplies kit and only a third have an evacuation plan. Of those with an evacuation plan, only half have made alternative living arrangements with evacuations in mind.

Along the southern coastline from North Carolina to Texas, considered more likely to be hit by hurricanes, the poll showed a higher level of concern among coastal residents.

"The dangers of hurricanes are real, and it is imperative that people at risk be prepared," says Dr. John Clizbe, Red Cross disaster services vice president.

Check the Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org/press/disaster for poll details.

Hurricane evacuation plans updated

Populous Hampton Roads faces a harsh disaster reality in the event of a major hurricane.

In an area prone to flooding, bridge and tunnel crossings on the James River limit traffic flow, creating a significant challenge for evacuating this at-risk population.

To address this challenge, VDEM joined with VDOT, the State Police and local emergency management officials to update and expand the Hampton Roads Traffic Control Plan.

In addition to the two-phased evacuation plan for lesser hurricane threats, the plan now includes an option to reverse lanes on Interstate 64.

The lane reversal option was developed for potential use if an extreme hurricane such as a Category 4 or greater storm threatened Hampton Roads.

Virginia's governor is the only one who can call for the implementation of the I-64 lane reversal plan.

"We had excellent cooperation with state agencies and local government in developing and updating our evacuation plans," said VDEM State Coordinator Michael Cline.

"It is prudent to have plans to address the worst case scenario. Adding the lane reversal option provides the governor with one more mechanism to better protect those in harm's way."



Mass exodus. Hurricane evacuation is no longer a two-way street with the lane reversal option (FEMA News Photo by Dave Gatley).

Exit modifications have been completed to prepare I-64 for this eventuality. These modifications include infrastructure improvements at the Route 199 exit in Williamsburg and the Bottoms Bridge exit near Richmond, allowing those in the reversed lanes to exit for highway services.

The backs of signs on the reversed lanes have been lettered with pertinent travel information, and the cross-over on Interstate Route 64 near Interstate Route 295 east of Richmond also has been completed.

Virginia Beach Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Mark Marchbank says the state has been progressive in dealing with issues involving hurricane evacuation,

but there is still more work to be done.

"We've met our moral responsibility to our citizens to have such a plan in place," says Marchbank. "We as local emergency managers must now address some of the local issues in regard to sheltering and evacuation."

For more information on lane reversal or related issues, contact VDEM Hurricane Planner Stewart Baker at (804) 695-9506 or by e-mail at baker@inna.net.

Look on page 2 for insights into the art of making hurricane evacuation decisions.

Evacuation and the art of making the right call

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

When a major hurricane heads for shore, emergency managers will have to decide how, when and where to evacuate residents in the path of the storm. That's the art of making the right call when the wind starts rising.

The stakes are high. Making the call too early, too often or too late could turn an evacuation directive into an emergency management nightmare. Dr. Jay Baker, Ph.D., an evacuation expert and professor at Florida State University, addressed these issues during a media briefing in Norfolk on June 1, the first day of the 2001 hurricane season.

In a recent study, Baker found many more people living in communities from Miami, Fla., up through the Outer Banks of North Carolina evacuated the area than needed to during 1999's Hurricane Floyd, causing massive traffic tie-ups.

"Many of them were actually in relatively safe areas, but they thought their homes were unsafe," Baker says.

The following factors affect public response to an evacuation:

- ▼ The risk area involved
- ▼ Actions by local officials
- ▼ Individuals' perceived vulnerability

For the most part, the Hurricane Floyd study showed the public responds well to evacuation orders from local officials. Four out of five who think they've been ordered to leave in strong hurricanes will leave, Baker says.

He found most people try to reach friends or relatives in safe areas. Others will strike out for a hotel or motel and, for many, public shelters are a destination of last resort.

The media perform a vital service both before and during a hurricane in keeping the public informed about weather and disaster developments. Three quarters of those surveyed turn to local TV as their primary source of information, Baker says.

After Hurricane Allen battered the lower Texas coast in 1980, more than four out of five Galveston residents responding to a poll said they would evacuate again if a hurricane came their way.

To learn more, check out the expanded version of this article on our Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate.



Hurricane News Network? Evacuation expert Jay Baker fields queries after the June 1 hurricane media briefing.



Signing on the dotted line. An exchange of signed agreements can quickly direct much-needed resources to stricken localities.

SMA spells disaster relief for localities

By Bill Edmonson

In the past, mutual aid often meant fire, rescue and police service chiefs helping each other at a local or regional level. Concerns about insurance, liability and "who pays?" were often big stumbling blocks.

Virginia's Statewide Mutual Aid (SMA) program has removed those barriers so localities statewide can help each other in time of need. So far, 98 localities have signed on to the program.

Now, when the next disaster strikes, we are ready to set the wheels in motion. Resources like these can be provided directly from one locality to another quickly and efficiently:

- Experienced local EM coordinators
- EOC staff specialists
- Fire and EMS task forces
- Public works engineers
- Shelter managers
- Building inspectors

Local officials (and especially EM coordinators) need to be familiar with the program so they can take full advantage of the resource network.

Although localities can implement the program on

their own, we recommend they coordinate their assistance requests through the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

A team of three to five persons with working knowledge of SMA is available to provide guidance to ensure deployments are appropriate and cost effective.

If you have a major localized disaster — such as the Hurricane Floyd flooding in the city of Franklin and Southampton County in 1999 — we can send a mutual aid coordination specialist from the SMA team to work in the local EOC to facilitate mutual aid on behalf of the disaster-affected locality.

The process is relatively simple. An exchange of signed faxes constitutes an official agreement or contract.

Essentially, the requesting locality enters into a contract with the assisting locality for providing specified services and guarantees to reimburse for all direct deployment-related costs.

Regular and overtime hours, lodging, meals and mileage are included. *(continued on page 4)*

Baker's hurricane evacuation tips:

- ☐ Make flood and surge zone maps available well ahead of time so individuals can determine whether they are at risk.
- ☐ Order evacuations in vulnerable areas where a hurricane is likely to strike.
- ☐ Provide information on how far individuals need to go to reach safety.

Accomack raises bar on reducing flood risks

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

When the winds of 1999's Hurricane Floyd abated, the storm warning flags came down and Accomack County residents breathed a collective sigh of relief. Unfortunately, that relief was short lived.

Floyd proved two points for residents of Virginia's Eastern Shore. First, when you least expect it, expect it. Second, it pays to build it right the first time. Though 300 structures suffered major flood damage, all homes built to the county's base flood elevation (BFE) code escaped with minimal storm damage.

Twenty-eight homeowners applied for mitigation funds through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Flood insurance and other private resources paid elevation costs for 10 more homes.

Depending on the complexity of the elevation, the cost for a typical dwelling should run from \$16,000 to \$32,000.

FEMA is funding 75 percent of the mitigation project. The state is providing another 20 percent in matching funds and homeowners or local entities will pay the remaining 5 percent. Accomack required homeowners to put a \$500 deposit in escrow to be used toward their match requirement.

Of 267 FEMA-recognized National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) participants, Accomack is among 16 Virginia localities qualifying for flood insurance premium rate reductions under NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS).



Moving on up. This Accomack County home is slated to be elevated to minimize flood risks.

Accomack met minimum NFIP requirements to reduce storm damage in the 100-year flood zones, earning a CRS rating of 10. Now, with an even better community rating of 8, property owners qualify for a 10-percent flood insurance discount.

"Accomack is among the leading localities in Virginia taking advantage of the flood insurance rate reductions under the Community Rating System," says Richard Dameron, manager of VDEM's hazard mitigation program.

These mitigation efforts should stand the county in good stead for reducing the damaging effects of potential future storms.

"We're on the edge of a lot of growth," says David Fluhart, Accomack building official and zoning administrator. "We're ready for it."

An expanded version of this article is available at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate. To learn more, contact Richard Dameron at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6525, or David Fluhart at (757) 787-5724.

Tailored PA workshops now available on site

VDEM now offers localities on-site training in recapturing disaster costs.

Lasting no more than half a day, the sessions are specifically tailored to local fiscal management systems.



"The workshop shows the best way of satisfying state and FEMA documentation requirements when applying for Public Assistance," says State Coordinator Michael Cline, who sent letters to local officials announcing the program.

"We analyze existing systems to achieve optimum results in navigating the paperwork maze that typically evolves following a major emergency or disaster."

Several Tidewater and Northern Virginia jurisdictions have completed the training and found it useful following recent disasters.

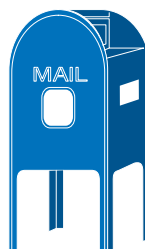
For more information on scheduling a workshop in your area, contact Bob Andersen, Public Assistance officer, by phone at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6538, or e-mail at bandersen@vdem.state.va.us.

E-easy subscription option now available for EM Update

Due to state budget constraints, VDEM will soon begin trimming the *Emergency Management Update* mailing list, but that doesn't mean you'll lose your statewide connection to EM news and information.

The following subscribers will continue to receive printed copies of our publication: emergency management directors, deputy directors, coordinators, deputy coordinators and hazmat coordinators. If you are not in one of these categories, you have two options.

1. Complete and mail this form to the address below by July 31 to continue receiving a copy by mail: Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Public Affairs Office, 10501 Trade Court, Richmond, Virginia 23236-3713.
2. Visit our Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate to subscribe to the full-color online version. You'll receive monthly e-mail messages containing the link to the PDF document available 5-7 days earlier than the printed copy.



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Training Calendar

Emergency Management

Principles of Emergency Mgmt.
July 10-12/Roanoke

Leadership & Influence
July 24-26/Richmond

Emergency Planning Workshop
August 14-16/Roanoke

Effective Communication
August 28-30/Richmond

Reservist Training

Action Tracking System
August 9/Richmond

Search and Rescue

SAR Council Meeting
July 28/Richmond

Technological Hazards

Public Safety Response to Terrorism (PSRT) — Tactical Considerations
July 16-18 & 17-19/Dahlgren
August 9-10/Ft. Pickett

PSRT — Awareness
July 22/Giles County

PSRT — Management
July 23/New River Comm. College



VEMA Summer Conference Set

Leadership for changing times is the underlying theme for the 2001 Virginia Emergency Management Association business meeting and training session Aug. 15-17.

Sign up now for the summer program at the Clarion Hotel Roanoke Airport by visiting our Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/train/calendar.cfm.

A complete agenda, speaker bios, and hotel and conference registration forms are available.

SMA (continued from page 2)

A good pre-deployment cost estimate must be a part of the agreement. Essentially, the assisting community deploys as it would within its own locality with the same pay rates, insurance coverage and liability protection.

Deployment-related costs must be well documented to ensure a prompt and accurate reimbursement. Once all assisting localities are reimbursed for these expenses, the requesting locality may seek reimbursement for the same costs through federal and state disaster assistance programs.

With SMA ready to go, emergency managers now have an additional resource to use when they need additional support and expertise in responding to a disaster.

The SMA Guidebook and other related references can be accessed through the Library link on the VDEM Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/library/mutualaid/StateMAid.cfm.

For more information about the Statewide Mutual Aid program, contact Don Morton, at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6527. (See boxed article below.)

SMA founder leaves VDEM



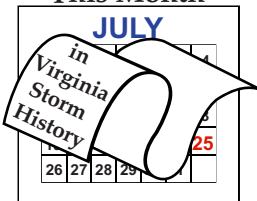
VDEM bids a fond farewell to Bill Edmonson who left the agency June 22 to become a consultant for Resource Planning, Inc., of Falls Church, Va. The firm provides services to businesses, and state and federal government.

The architect of Virginia's Statewide Mutual Aid program leaves a lasting legacy from more than 30 years of service. His contributions include the statewide process for developing and adopting local emergency operations plans, current structure of the state Emergency Operations Plan and Virginia's leadership role in the national Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) process.

The former emergency services planning supervisor will remain active in the SMA program and available to assist with related issues during the transition.

In addition to their usual devastation, hurricanes can spawn tornadoes as well. Hurricane Bob moved into central Virginia July 25, 1985. A large band of thunderstorms intensified over central Virginia and moved rapidly north. The storms produced strong winds and tornadoes in Goochland, Hanover and Albemarle counties. The Albemarle County twister grew into an F3 tornado and moved into Greene County.

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